

NOAA Definitions for Performance Measurement

Introduction

The intent of the revised definitions for Performance Management is to define and standardize terminology used across NOAA's Performance Measurement Guidance documents. Some definitions and terms are derived from key government initiatives, while others are specific to NOAA. The definitions are organized as a glossary of terms and serve as a tool for consistent and accurate performance management communication.

A-11 – OMB Circular No. A-11: Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget (A-11) is divided into eight sections. The first four sections explain the budget process and provide instructions on budget execution. Section five applies to Federal Credit Programs. The sixth section applies GPRA requirements to strategic planning, annual performance planning, and program performance reporting. Planning, budgeting, and acquisition of capital assets and managing capital assets are covered in section eight.

Accountability - a responsibility to explain actions undertaken. Accountability requires managers to (1) clarify what is expected, (2) examine program activities and performance measures and compare its performance with what is expected, (3) act on findings to improve program activities and performance measures, and (4) communicate findings in accordance with agency and government regulations.

Activities – The further separation of NOAA's Program Components into functions that deliver products and services to accomplish an objective

Capability – The ability to do something with the capacity you have; the capacity to be used, treated or developed for a specific purpose.

Capacity – Resources used to produce an output; products or services resulting from an activity. A component of a capability.

Cross-Cutting Priority -- Areas of emphasis identified in NOAA's Strategic Plan. Establishes the programmatic and managerial foundation for delivery of services and effective operations throughout the agency or across multiple Line Offices. In addition to supporting NOAA's mission goals, each priority maintains a budget identity and has its own performance measures. The management of these priorities is found within an identified program or a council.

The six Cross-Cutting priorities are:

- Integrated Global Environmental Observation and Data Management
- Environmental Literacy, Outreach, and Education
- Sound, State-Of-the-Art Research
- International Cooperation and Collaboration
- Homeland Security
- Organizational Excellence

Effectiveness – An assessment of the qualitative level of achievement of program goals and the intended results.

Efficiency – The quality of being efficient. It is the ratio of the effective or useful output to the total input. Producing effectively with a minimum of waste, expense, or unnecessary effort.

Evaluation - To thoroughly examine, to assess, to appraise.

Frame of Reference – The applicable level in the NOAA Performance Measurement Pyramid; Goal, Program, Program Component or Activity.

Goal – An elaboration of the mission statement, developing with greater specificity as to how an agency will focus its mission. The NOAA Strategic Plan states NOAA's four Mission Goals.

GPRA - Government Performance Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) addresses a broad range of concerns about government accountability and performance. GPRA goals are focused on the results of government activity and services, supporting congressional oversight and decision-making, and improving the managerial and internal workings of agencies within the federal government. GPRA is unique in its requirement that agency "results" be integrated into the budgetary decision-making process.

Input – The financial and human resources, intellectual processes and infrastructure the agency uses.

Long-term Performance Measure: Long-term performance measures are outcome measures that directly and meaningfully support the program's purpose. "Long-term" is defined as covering a relatively long period of time relative to the nature of the program but is likely to be on the order of 5-10 years and consistent with time periods for strategic goals used in the Agency Strategic Plan. (From the PART guidance)

Milestone – A major scheduled point in time during which a cohesive set of significant objectives (e.g., set of tasks completed, set of work products delivered) is to be achieved

Mission – A concise statement on what the agency is charged to do. The NOAA mission is ***To understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment and conserve and manage coastal and marine resources to meet our Nation's economic, social, and environmental needs.***

Objective – An elaboration of a goal statement, developing with greater specificity the intent of the goal. May provide insight into strategy for achieving the goal. Used below the Goal level to describe the intended results.

Outcome – An end result - both expected and unexpected, of the customer's use or application of the organization's outputs.

Output – Products or services resulting from activities.

PART – The Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) is an accountability tool that determines strengths and weaknesses of federal programs with particular focus on individual programs results. PART consists of four sections and approximately 30 questions based on a yes/no format. The four sections are program purpose, strategic planning, management, and results (Including performance measurement).

Performance Management - Performance Management is the systematic process of monitoring the results of activities; collecting and analyzing performance information to track progress toward planning results; using performance information to inform program decision-making and resource allocation; and communicating results achieved, or not attained, to advance organizational learning and tell the Agency's story.

Performance Measure – A structured statement that describes the means by which actual outcomes and outputs are measured against planned outcomes and outputs. To be effective, they must be aligned with NOAA's Strategic Goals and gauged at all program levels. Performance measures consist of four parts: Indicator, Unit of Measure, Baseline, and Target.

- **Indicator** – The part of a performance measure that defines the attribute or characteristic to be measured. A particular value or characteristic used to measure outcome or output.

- **Unit of Measure** – The part of a performance measure that describes what is to be measured (i.e., number of, percentage of, group of).

- **Baseline** – The part of a performance measure that establishes the initial level of measurement (value and date) against which targeted progress and success is compared. A baseline includes both a starting date and starting level/value.

- **Target** – The part of a performance measure that establishes the desired level to be reached in a defined time period, usually stated as an improvement over the baseline.

PMA – The President's Management Agenda, announced in the summer 2001, is an aggressive strategy for improving the management of the Federal government. It focuses on five areas of management weakness across the government where improvements and the most progress can be made. The five areas are:

1. strategic management of human capital
2. competitive sourcing
3. improved financial performance
4. expanded electronic performance
5. budget and performance integration.

The Executive Branch Management Scorecard tracks how well the departments and major agencies are executing the five government-wide management initiatives.

Program – A planned, coordinated set of activities designed to achieve a desired outcome. The defined effort with the purpose of meeting existing requirements or providing a new or improved capability to meet stated requirements. These are officially established by the NOAA Executive Council. A program is comprised of a combination of program components and capabilities.

Program Components -- The further separation of NOAA's Programs into sub-elements that deliver products and services to accomplish an objective.

Requirement – Validated needs that determine what must be done and the capabilities and capacities that must be available to achieve desired outcomes. Note: Initial Goal, Program, Program Component and Activity requirements are identified in a Statement of Need (SON).

Requirement Driver – A legal mandate, policy, treaty, or international agreement that drives a requirement.

Result – That which is produced by an output or an outcome.

Strategic Goal – Also called a strategic objective. A statement of aim or purpose that agencies include in a strategic plan. Typically, a strategic goal will not be directly measurable. Strategic goals can be used to group outcome goals in a performance budget.

Strategic Plan - The strategic plan shall cover a period of not less than five years forward from the fiscal year in which it is submitted, and shall be updated and revised at least every three years. Strategic plans must include the following

1. a comprehensive mission statement
2. general goals and objectives, including outcome- related goals and objectives
3. a description of how the goals and objectives are to be achieved, including a description of the operational processes, skills and technology, and the human, capital, information, and other resources required to meet those goals and objectives
4. a description of how the performance goals included in the plan required under section 2803 shall be related to the general goals and objectives in the strategic plan
5. an identification of those key external factors external that could significantly affect the achievement of the general goals and objectives
6. a description of the program evaluations used in establishing or revising general goals and objectives, with a schedule for future program evaluations.

Strategy – A specific course of action chosen to achieve an outcome.

Vision – A guiding statement providing the strategic direction for the agency given an established mission. The NOAA Vision is ***To move NOAA into the 21st Century scientifically and operationally, in the same interrelated manner as the environment that we observe and forecast, while recognizing the link between the global economy and our planet's environment.***